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Withdrawn From Embassies

C.I.A. Agents Lose 'Diplomatic Cover'

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HYANNIS PORT, Mass.—As part of President Kennedy's overhaul of the Central Intelligence Agency, large numbers of C.I.A. agents are being quietly withdrawn from United States embassies overseas.

Previously, C.I.A. agents abroad enjoyed "diplomatic cover," the cloak-and-dagger phrase for agents operating under the guise of embassy personnel. In fact, however, American ambassadors overseas have no control over such C.I.A. agents, even though they nominally are attached to the State Department. This has led to conflicts and embarrassments in the past.

The move does not mean that the overseas C.I.A. personnel will stop operating. But those being withdrawn from "diplomatic cover" will have to find other ways to cloak their activities, according to sources in Washington.

Presumably more will now be posing as American businessmen. In the "dirty tricks" trade this is known as "commercial cover." The Kennedy administration's action is part of a general effort to change the C.I.A. and establish clear lines of authority.

Meanwhile, it is understood that the President's decision on whether and how to streamline C.I.A. is coming to a head. In the wake of the Cuban invasion disaster, Mr. Kennedy named Gen. Maxwell D. Taylor to study what might be done to overhaul the intelligence system.

Gen. Taylor, named as the President's "Military Representative" in the White House, reportedly orally to the chief executive—practically a precaution to avoid "news leaks" about the intelligence survey. (The President had ordered the FBI to investigate news leaks about Berlin and other planning).

While the report is super-secret, it can be seen that two broad changes in the intelligence establishment are currently under consideration by the White House.

First is a plan to merge the intelligence

and research functions of the State Department with the C.I.A. intelligence-gathering functions into a new agency.

The new agency would be related to the State Department much as is the case of the United States Information Agency. At present, the State Department has liaison with, but no measure of control over, the activities of the C.I.A.

The second proposal under consideration would be to take away from C.I.A. all operational functions, such as its organization of the invasion of Cuba by anti-Castro exiles. One criticism of C.I.A. has been that intelligence-gathering and covert operations should not be conducted by the same agency.

The problem is where to put the operational arm of C.I.A. if it is removed from the agency. One solution would be to assign it to the Pentagon, but there is strong Congressional pressure against this.

In making his decision on these matters, the President is also expected to be guided by the findings of Dr. James H. Killian, Jr., who was asked by Mr. Kennedy to head a permanent board charged with checking up on C.I.A. and other United States intelligence activities.